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STRAUSS' "SALOME"

RICHARD STRAUSS

STRAUSS' "SALOME"

A GUIDE TO THE OPERA

WITH MUSICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

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"Phases of Modern Music," "Edward MacDowell" (in the Living Masters of Music Series), "The Music of To-morrow," etc

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TO

ALFRED HERTZ

A CONDUCTOR OF TEMPERAMENT

AND AUTHORITY

AND THE INTRODUCER OF THE

MUSIC OF "SALOME"

TO AMERICA

PREFACE

THE writer was invited to prepare this little book with the idea of satisfying, in some measure, the widespread curiosity and interest awakened among music lovers by Strauss' much-discussed and—at the moment of writing—unfamiliar opera. He has had no other intention than to furnish an outline of the dramatic and musical structure of the work, feeling that the uncommon attention which it has attracted warrants such an attempt at an exposition of its content. What the essential artistic value of Strauss' score may seem to be, and how far it appears likely to fulfill the predictions which have been made for it, are questions purely of critical appraisement, and have no legitimate bearing upon so wholly utilitarian an endeavor as this. Whatever convictions as to its æsthetic quality may continue to assert themselves, they have not, naturally, been permitted to govern

the entirely objective approach to the work which has been in this place the sole concern of the writer. What has been undertaken here is neither an estimate nor an exhaustive analytical study of Strauss' music drama, but a general survey of its more salient dramatic and musical features. It pretends neither to finality nor to inspired interpretation; but if it shall serve as an introduction to one of the most formidable and conspicuous of modern scores, it will have achieved its very modest purpose.—It does not pretend, as has been said, to inspired interpretation. Since Strauss has not chosen to define explicitly the precise significance of each member of the system of leading motives which he has used, any such naming of them as is necessary to a comprehension of their meaning must be largely inferential; but their relation to the dramatic structure is in most cases so obvious that they virtually identify themselves. Such latitude as has been exercised in their determination will, it is hoped, supply its own justification.

The writer takes pleasure in acknowledging the benefit which he has received from the cor-

dial interest bestowed upon his task by Mr. Alfred Hertz, to whose enthusiastic activities are due the actual inclusion of "Salome" in the repertoire of the Metropolitan Opera House.

To Mr. Philip Hale is due an acknowledgment of indebtedness for certain details of Salome-lore that have been appreciatively utilized.

L. G.

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STRAUSS' "SALOME"

"Tout ce que j'ai voulu faire, c'est quelque chose de curieux et de sensuel."

—Oscar Wilde, to Sarah Bernhardt.

I

THE STORY OF "SALOME"

The Daughter of Herodias in History and Art

"Salome," a "drama in one act after the like named poem of Oscar Wilde, music by Richard Strauss," was first performed at the Royal Opera House, Dresden, on December 9, 1905, with these singers in the cast: *Herodes,* Karl Burrian; *Herodias*, Irene von Chavanne; *Salome*, Marie Wittich; *Jochanaan*, Karl Perron. Ernst von Schuch conducted. A German translation of Wilde's text made by Hedwig Lachmann was used. The work was received with unbounded enthusiasm, and there were

thirty-eight recalls for the singers, the conductor, and the composer when the curtain fell after the brief performance, lasting an hour and a half. Strauss' music-drama has since been clamored for and produced by an increasing number of the opera houses of Germany.

The story of Salome, her dance before Herod, her connection with the life of John the Baptist, has inspired innumerable painters, dramatists, and poets; yet its most powerful and hauntingly imaginative setting is doubtless the one-act prose drama of Wilde, the basis of Strauss' opera. Wilde wrote his play in French for Sarah Bernhardt, and he expected that she would produce it and enact the part of the heroine; but when the drama was performed in Paris at the Nouveau Théâtre on October 28, 1896, Mme. Lina Munte, and not Mme. Bernhardt, played the part of *Salome*. Two years before the Paris performance an English translation of the play, made by Lord Alfred Douglas, was published, with highly characteristic illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley; and this version was performed for the first time in London on May 10, 1905. It was produced in

New York, in the following November, by the Progressive Stage Society. A German version is in the repertory of Mr. Conried's Irving Place Theater, New York. In Germany, and more particularly in Berlin, "Salome" has been played with extraordinary success; and it has been produced in Italy, in France, and in Spain.

The earliest familiar sources of the Salome legend are, of course, the two versions in the New Testament, told by Matthew and by Mark. They may be recalled here without impertinence. Mark gives the more circumstantial account (vi. 17-28):

"For Herod . . . had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not: for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

"And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee; and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom. And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist. And the king was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head in a charger and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother."

In the story as told more tersely by Matthew

(xiv. 1-11), it may be recalled that Herodias' daughter had been "before instructed of her mother" to demand in payment for her dance the head of the Prophet; whereas, according to Mark, the bargain had not been prearranged. It may be noted that Salome is not mentioned by name in either of these accounts—she is merely "the daughter of Herodias" and "the damsel"; nor does the name in this association appear anywhere in the Old or New Testaments. According to profane history, Salome (which in Greek and in Hebrew means, oddly enough, *peaceful*) was the daughter of Herodias by her first husband, Herod Philip. She was not killed by order of Herod, as in Wilde's play, but lived on prosaically, and married twice. Her first husband was Philip, Tetrarch of Trachonitus, her paternal uncle; her second was her cousin, Aristobulus, son of Herod, the King of Chalcis. There is a legend—scouted by the best authorities—which embodies a highly colored account of her death. According to this, probably apocryphal, account, Salome accompanied her mother Herodias and her father-in-law Herod in their banishment from

Judæa. In the course of their wanderings, the ice of a frozen river over which they passed broke under Salome's feet, and she sank in up to her neck, whereupon the ice united again and she remained suspended by it, suffering the same punishment she had caused John the Baptist to undergo—a retribution doubtless too poetically just for historic actuality!

According to Josephus, Salome, granddaughter of Herod the Great and of Mariamne, had three sons by her second husband—Herod, Agrippa, and Aristobulus: "and this," adds Josephus succinctly, "was the posterity of Phasaelus and Salampsio." To complete our brief excursion into ancient Jewish history, it may be to the point to quote Josephus' version of the story of John's death, which is even briefer than the Biblical narratives. "Herod," * says Josephus, "who feared lest the

* Herod Antipas (the Herod of Wilde's drama) was the son of Herod the Great. He was appointed by his father in an early will as his successor to the throne, but the ultimate arrangement left him with only the tetrarchy of Galilee. His first wife was the daughter of Aretas, king of the Nabathæans, but he abandoned her to marry Herodias, daughter

great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do anything he should advise) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause. . . . Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus [a fortress on the frontier between the dominions of Aretas and Herod] and was there put to death." Josephus gives no hint of the part played by Herodias and her daughter in the Prophet's death; but historians are inclined to believe that the evangelists give the true version, and Josephus the one generally received by the people.

From such origins as have been outlined here, the poets, painters, and dramatists have contrived the plays and pictures that have for their

of Aristobulus and wife of his half-brother Herod Philip. This involved him in a war with his father-in-law Aretas. When his nephew, Agrippa I, was made King of Judæa by Caligula, Antipas, urged by Herodias, journeyed to Rome also to obtain a kingdom. Here he was accused by Agrippa of treachery to Rome, whereupon Antipas was deprived of his principality and banished to Lyons, "a city of Gaul." He was followed there by his wife, and both died in exile.

motive the strange and fascinating figure of the dancing daughter of Herodias. She has quickened the imaginations of painters from Leonardo da Vinci and Titian and Veronese and Rubens and Dürer, to the Frenchmen, Henri Regnault and Gustave Moreau, whose rhapsodies in color upon the theme of the vengeful princess of Judæa adorned the Paris Salon in the seventies. A Spanish writer, Gomez Carillo, has recorded in an essay—lately translated into English and German — an illuminating talk which he had with Oscar Wilde concerning famous portraits of Salome. "I have always longed to go to Spain," Wilde observed, "that I might see in the Prado Titian's Salome, of which Tintoretto once exclaimed: 'Here at last is a man who paints the quivering flesh!'" Wilde, says Carillo, dreamed continually of Salome and her dance, sometimes seeing her chaste, as "a gentle princess who danced before Herod as if by a call from Heaven." At other times he saw her quivering body "lily tall and pale. . . . Veils woven by angels conceal her slenderness, her blonde hair flows like molten gold over her shoulders." No picture

seemed to satisfy his ideal. The Salome of Leonardo was too cold in its dignity. He did not tarry before the Salome of Dürer, of Ghirlandajo, of Leclerc, of Van Thulden. The Salome of Regnault was a gipsy with an English complexion. Moreau's revealed to him "the soul of the dancing princess of his dreams," and thinking of this picture, he would repeat Huysman's sumptuous words: "She is nearly naked. In the whirl of the dance the veils are unloosed, the shawls are fallen to the ground, and only jewels clothe her body. The tiniest of girdles spans her hips; a costly jewel glows like a star between her breasts; a chain of garnets fades into the glow of her hair." He would stop before a jeweler's window and imagine various combinations of gems for her adornment. He imagined her nude, "but strewn with jewels, all ringing and tinkling in her hair, on her ankles, her wrists, her throat, enclosing her hips and heightening with their myriad glittering reflections the unchastity of that unchaste amber flesh. For of an unknowing Salome, who is a mere tool, I refuse to hear a word. In Leonardo's painting, her lips dis-

close the boundless cruelty of her heart. Her splendor must be an abyss; her desire, an ocean . . . the pearls on her breast die of love; the bloom of her maidenhood pales the opals and fires the rubies, while even the sapphires on this feverish skin lose the purity of their luster."

It has been said that Wilde in writing his play was strongly influenced by Gustave Flaubert's tale "Hérodias," in the collection "Trois Contes"; for Flaubert is one of the many who, before Wilde, recounted in prose their versions and perversions of the old Hebrew chronicle. Mallarmé, Jules Laforgue, Sudermann, are a few of the moderns who have improvised, more or less deliberately, upon this theme. An interesting version is the pantomime, with music, contrived by Charles Henry Meltzer in collaboration with Armand Sylvestre, which was produced at the Comédie Parisienne in March, 1895. Loïe Fuller danced as the young princess. Gabriel Pierné composed the music, although it had at first been intended that the American composer, Frank Van der Stucken, should do so. In this version the familiar story receives a novel and effective twist. The panto-

mime comprises four tableaux, cumulative in intensity. At the outset, Herod makes evident his veneration for John, who is represented not only as a forerunner and prophet, but as the would-be counselor of the debauched tyrant. John urges Herod to abandon the adulterous Herodias, the wife of his brother. Herodias, in the fury of her resentment, employs Salome as the unconscious instrument of her hatred against the Baptist. At her mother's command Salome dances before the king in the presence of John, who is about to withdraw when Salome gives him a beseeching glance, and he divines that she is innocent and in need of his protection. The dance becomes religious, but Herod, his passion inflamed by the beauty of Salome, interrupts it imperiously. John interposes, and Herod, angered at the interference, orders him into custody. Salome implores that his life be spared, and Herod consents, claiming her favor as the price of his clemency. In despair she at last consents to the bargain, and the tyrant makes a sign to stay the executioner. But the pardon comes too late, for a slave appears bearing the severed head of John, and at the sight Salome falls dead.

Richard Hengist Horne, the author of "Orion," wrote three "Bible Tragedies," one of which is entitled "John the Baptist, or the Valor of the Soul," published, thinks Mr. Philip Hale, about 1880, in which the main lines of the Scriptural story are followed. During Salome's dance Herod rhapsodizes in verse which at least has the merit of fervor:

"The priestess of Sol's Temple now hath sent
A goddess clad in nought but odorous clouds
To madden each delight! No more! No more!
Yet cease not—cease not—my brain whirls! No more!
Her flying locks were golden! Now they change
To gilded black, shot with a lightning blue!
Now, all of silver! tossing flames! and now—
Her limbs are roseate, and a sparkling dew
Besprays her symmetry, as from the sea
Her feet came splashing thro' the bright-edged foam!
I say, no more! Oh, I do swear to give thee
Whatever thou shalt ask, thou wondrous sprite!
Yea, to my kingdom's half—hear it, ye gods!
Ye great lords, captains all—all hear the king!"

Almost twenty years before Horne's "tragedy" appeared—in 1862—the Putnams pub-

lished in this country a "dramatic poem" entitled "Salome, the Daughter of Herodias," written by Joseph Converse Heywood, which is, so far as is immediately discoverable, the only American contribution to the large dramatic and poetical literature based upon this theme—with which, I need scarcely say in passing, this brief note does not pretend to deal comprehensively.

Mr. Hale has lately reminded us of Gustav Nicolai's not too impressive libretto for an oratorio, "John the Baptist," published at Leipsic in 1835, in which Herod and Herodias have a saccharine love duet, and which closes with Salome lamenting her deed and Herodias cursing the day of her birth.

Before Strauss composed his opera the most familiar musical exploitation of the Salome legend was, of course, Massenet's "Hérodiade," in which the princess, enamored of John, sings a love duet with the Prophet in his prison, and is unaware until the end that Herodias is her mother: a characteristically Gallic version —by way of which we return again to Oscar Wilde and his brilliant French play.

The Drama Itself

Whatever opinion one may hold concerning the subject-matter of Wilde's play—and this is not the place to indulge in the luxury of extended critical comment—there can be no question of the potency of the work as dramatic literature. At the least, it is a remarkable *tour de force*; and few will deny the maleficent power and the imaginative intensity with which it is carried through, from its vivid beginning to its climactic and truly appalling close. Passion and terror are its chief emotional accents—passion and terror and the note of an overshadowing destiny: these are its keynotes. It has, in a conspicuous and singular degree, the true fate-burdened atmosphere of classic tragedy—indeed, a persistent appreciator might even find in it an enforcement of the antique tradition of expiation. It might justly bear for its motto a paraphrase of the cry of the protagonist in a contemporary tragedy, equally charged with the spirit of disaster and sudden fate: "O Princess, there is no evil done upon the world that the wind does not bring back to the feet of him who made it."

The reader will note the insistent use of such modern symbols as wind and shadow, employed as a kind of fantastic and aphoristic Chorus. There is, for example, a Shelley-like dalliance with natural images—as the wind and the moon. Thus for Herod, crime-haunted and lustful, the wind is full of sinister omens—he hears in it "something that is like the beating of vast wings"; the wind is "icy"; again it is hot, and chokes him. The moon, to him, "is like a mad woman, a mad woman who is seeking everywhere for lovers. She is naked, too . . . the clouds are seeking to clothe her nakedness, but she will not let them. . . . Does she not reel like a drunken woman?" To the young Narraboth, in love with Salome, the moon, on the other hand, "is like a little princess who wears a yellow veil, and whose feet are of silver. She is like a princess who has little doves for feet." To the apprehensive Page, who foresees direful results from his friend's infatuation, she is "like a woman rising from a tomb. . . . You would fancy she was looking for dead things." While to Salome—before she has become inflamed by the sight of John—the moon is "cold and

chaste. . . . She has a virgin's beauty." One cannot but think, after all this, of Shelley's moon that was

> "pale for weariness
> Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth—"

or was

> "like a dying lady lean and pale,
> Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,
> Out of her chamber, led by the insane
> And feeble wanderings of her fading brain."

One should not forget — as many doubtless will—to give due credit to the admirably poetic and eloquent English translation of Wilde's text made by Lord Alfred Douglas, with its curious and striking mixture of the verbal style of the King James version and something of the rhythmic cadence of M. Maeterlinck—a sufficiently odd yet influential compound.

Wilde's chief departure from the Scriptural and legendary originals in the matter of plot consists in imputing to Salome a consuming and insatiable passion for the Prophet, and in making the request for his head in payment for her dancing a voluntary one, unprompted by her

mother Herodias. Salome would kiss the lips of John; and, her passionate importunities being repulsed by the Prophet, she demands his head, that she may bestow upon his dead lips the kisses which she had burned to give them in life. The dramatist has still further altered and amplified the traditional story by bringing the figure of Herod far more prominently into the action. The Tetrarch is shown as harboring an ill-concealed and growing passion for his niece and stepdaughter, Salome—a passion which is turned to horrified loathing at the close of the drama, when, at the sight of the enraptured princess caressing the severed head of John, he impetuously commands her death.

The persons of the play are these: *

HEROD ANTIPAS ..... *Tetrarch of Judæa*
JOKANAAN ..... *The Prophet*
NARRABOTH ..... *Captain of the Guard*
A CAPPADOCIAN.
FIRST SOLDIER.
SECOND SOLDIER.

* As adapted by Strauss, the play omits the characters of Tigellinus, the young Roman, and "A Nubian." Some unessential dialogue is eliminated, and the action of the drama is quickened in numerous places.

THE PAGE OF HERODIAS.
JEWS, NAZARENES, Etc.
A SLAVE.
NAAMAN ..... *The Executioner*
HERODIAS ..... *Wife of the Tetrarch*
SALOME ..... *Daughter of Herodias*
THE SLAVES OF SALOME.

The scene opens upon a great terrace in the palace of Herod, set above the banqueting hall. Some soldiers, among them Narraboth, a young Syrian captain, and the page of Herodias, are leaning over the balcony. To the right there is a gigantic staircase; to the left, at the back, an old cistern surrounded by a wall of green bronze. The cistern constitutes the dungeon of John the Baptist—"Jokanaan" in the play. Narraboth, the young Syrian, enamored of Salome, gazes longingly into the banquet hall, where the princess sits at the feast with Herod and his court. It is moonlight, and Narraboth pines for his beloved. "How beautiful is the Princess Salome to-night!" he sighs. But the page of Herodias, who apprehends evil from his friend's passion for the princess, contradicts him gloomily. "She is like a woman who is dead," he says.

The uproar in the banqueting hall increases. . . . "They are disputing about their religion," explains one of the soldiers. Looking in, they remark to one another that Herod has a somber look, and that he is gazing at some one. "How pale the princess is!" sighs Narraboth again. "Never have I seen her so pale. She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver." There breaks in upon their discourse the voice of Jokanaan, heard from the depths of the cistern, prophesying the coming of One mightier than he. The soldiers recall the story of his strange career, and discuss his fantastic ways: of his coming out of the desert, "where he fed on locusts and wild honey. He was very terrible to look upon. A great multitude used to follow him. He even had disciples." They wonder what he is talking of. "Sometimes he says terrible things, but it is impossible to understand what he says."

The young Syrian, Narraboth, cries out that the princess is leaving the table; and Salome comes out onto the terrace, protesting that she cannot stay in the banqueting hall, with the Tetrarch looking at her all the while "with his

mole's eyes under his shaking eyelids"; she wonders that the husband of her mother should look at her like that. She luxuriates in the open air of the terrace, away from "the Jews from Jerusalem, who are tearing each other in pieces over their foolish ceremonies, and barbarians who drink and drink, and spill their wine on the pavement, and Greeks from Smyrna with painted eyes and painted cheeks, and frizzled hair curled in twisted coils, and silent, subtle Egyptians, with long nails of jade and russet cloaks, and Romans brutal and coarse, with their uncouth jargon." Again is heard the voice of Jokanaan, announcing the coming of his Master. Salome, her attention arrested, asks who it is that has cried out. They tell her that it is the prophet. "He of whom the Tetrarch is afraid? who says terrible things about my mother?" she asks. Herod sends a message begging that she return to the feast, and Narraboth urges her to do so, prophesying some evil; but Salome refuses, and inquires with interest whether Jokanaan be young or old. He is young, they tell her, and again are heard the prophetic accents of Jokanaan. Salome remarks

upon the strangeness of his voice, and would speak with him. She is told that it is impossible; that the Tetrarch has forbidden any communication with Jokanaan. Salome insists; and, the soldiers still demurring, she appeals to Narraboth, importuning him with persuasive words; taunting him with fear; and finally promising him a special favor if he will grant her request —she will even smile at him on the morrow when she passes in her litter "by the bridge of the idol-buyers." Narraboth, succumbing reluctantly to her solicitations, commands that the Prophet be brought forth.

Jokanaan comes out of the cistern. Salome looks at him and steps slowly back.

"Where is she," chants Jokanaan, "who having seen the images of men painted on the walls, the images of the Chaldeans limned in colors, gave herself up unto the lust of her eyes, and sent ambassadors into Chaldea?"

"It is of my mother that he speaks," says Salome. Jokanaan continues his denunciation with growing fervor. Salome is impressed and fascinated. "But he is terrible, he is terrible!" she exclaims. "It is his eyes above all that are

terrible. They are like black holes burned by torches in a Tyrian tapestry. They are like black caverns where dragons dwell. They are like the black caverns of Egypt in which the dragons make their lairs. They are like black lakes troubled by fantastic moons. . . . Do you think he will speak again?" she inquires of Narraboth, who has been standing by, an agitated witness of Salome's waxing infatuation. He entreats her to leave, to return to the banquet. But she pays no heed to him. "I must look at him closer," she says. "How wasted he is! He is like an image of silver. I am sure he is chaste as the moon is. His flesh must be cool like ivory."

"Who is this woman who is looking at me?" asks Jokanaan. "I will not have her look at me. Wherefore doth she look at me with her golden eyes, under her gilded eyelids? I know not who she is. I do not wish to know who she is. Bid her begone. It is not to her that I would speak."

Salome tells him her name and rank, whereupon, recognizing her as the daughter of the infamous Herodias, he imperiously orders her

out of his sight, telling her that her mother has "filled the earth with the wine of her iniquities," and that the cry of her sins has come up to the ears of God. But Salome, oblivious of his taunts, and with growing infatuation, only urges him to speak again. He denounces her as a daughter of Sodom, and exhorts her to scatter ashes upon her head and seek in the desert the Son of Man.

"Who is he, the Son of Man?" she asks. "Is he as beautiful as thou art, Jokanaan?"

"Get thee behind me!" he commands; and he tells her that he "hears in the palace the beating of the wings of the angel of death."

Salome, regardless of everything save her newly aroused passion, apostrophizes the Forerunner in this striking scene:

Salome: Jokanaan, I am amorous of thy body! Thy body is white like the lilies of the field that the mower hath never mowed. Thy body is white like the snows that lie on the mountains, like the snows that lie on the mountains of Judæa, and come down into the valleys. The roses in the garden of the Queen of Arabia are not as white as thy body. Neither the roses in the garden of the Queen of Arabia, the per-

fumed garden of the spices of the Queen of Arabia, nor the feet of the dawn when they light on the leaves, nor the breast of the moon when she lies on the breast of the sea. . . . There is nothing in the world so white as thy body. Let me touch thy body.

Jokanaan: Back! daughter of Babylon! By woman came evil into the world. Speak not to me. I will not listen to thee. I listen but to the voice of the Lord God.

Salome: Thy body is hideous. It is like the body of a leper. It is like a plastered wall where vipers have crawled; like a plastered wall where the scorpions have made their nest. It is like a whitened sepulchre full of loathsome things. It is horrible, thy body is horrible. It is of thy hair that I am enamored, Jokanaan. Thy hair is like clusters of grapes, like the clusters of black grapes that hang from the vine-trees of Edom in the land of the Edomites. Thy hair is like the cedars of Lebanon, like the great cedars of Lebanon that give their shade to the lions and to the robbers who would hide themselves by day. The long black nights, when the moon hides her face, when the stars are afraid, are not so black. The silence that dwells in the forest is not so black. There is nothing in the world so black as thy hair. . . . Let me touch thy hair.

Jokanaan: Back! daughter of Sodom! Touch me not. Profane not the temple of the Lord God.

Salome: Thy hair is horrible. It is covered with mire and dust. It is like a crown of thorns which they have placed on thy forehead. It is like a knot of black serpents writhing round thy neck. I love not thy hair. . . . It is thy mouth that I desire, Jokanaan. Thy mouth is like a band of scarlet on a tower of ivory. It is like a pomegranate cut with a knife of ivory. The pomegranate flowers that blossom in the gardens of Tyre, and are redder than roses, are not so red. The red blasts of trumpets that herald the approach of kings, and make afraid the enemy, are not so red. Thy mouth is redder than the feet of those who tread the wine in the wine press. Thy mouth is redder than the feet of the doves who haunt the temples and are fed by the priests. It is redder than the feet of him who cometh from a forest where he hath slain a lion, and seen gilded tigers. Thy mouth is like a branch of coral that fishers have found in the twilight of the sea, the coral that they keep for the kings! . . . It is like the vermilion that the Moabites find in the mines of Moab, the vermilion that the kings take from them. It is like the bow of the King of the Persians, that is painted with vermilion and is tipped with coral.

There is nothing in the world so red as thy mouth. . . . Let me kiss thy mouth.

Jokanaan: Never! daughter of Babylon! Daughter of Sodom! never!

Salome: I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan. I will kiss thy mouth.

The Young Syrian: Princess, Princess, thou who art like a garden of myrrh, thou who art the dove of all doves, look not at this man, look not at him! Do not speak such words to him. I cannot suffer them. . . . Princess, do not speak these things.

Salome: I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan.

At this point, Narraboth, unable longer to endure the spectacle of his beloved's abandonment, kills himself and falls between Salome and Jokanaan. But Salome, undeterred even by this tragedy, continues her passionate supplications with scarcely a pause. "Art thou not afraid, Daughter of Herodias?" asks Jokanaan. And he tells her that there is but one who can save her: He who is in a boat on the sea of Galilee; and he exhorts her to kneel down on the shore of the sea, and call unto Him by His name, and when He comes, to ask of Him the remission of her sins.

"Let me kiss thy mouth!" cries Salome, deaf to everything save the voice of her desire. And when he curses her as the "daughter of an incestuous mother," she merely reiterates: "I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan."

"I will not look at thee," he says; "thou art accursed." And he goes down again into the cistern.

Herod enters, crowned with a wreath of flowers, and accompanied by Herodias and all the Court. "Where is Salome?" he asks uneasily. "Why did she not return to the banquet as I commanded her?" Then he sees her, and gazes at her lustfully "with his mole's eyes." Herodias, deeply distrustful of her undisciplined spouse, exclaims angrily: "You must not look at her! You are always looking at her!" She suggests that they go within. . . . "You have nothing to do here," she adds significantly. But Herod insists upon staying; and he orders carpets laid and torches brought. "I will drink more wine with my guests," he says. Then he exclaims in sudden agitation, for he has slipped in the blood of the dead Narraboth. It is an ill omen, he apprehends. He orders the body

removed, with the comment that "the young Syrian was fair to look upon. . . . He had very languorous eyes." "I remember," he says, "that he looked languorously at Salome. Truly, I thought he looked at her too much."

"There are others," insinuates Herodias, "who look at her too much."

Herod complains of cold; he is sure that there is a wind blowing, although Herodias tells him that the air is calm. Herod insists; he hears in the air, he says superstitiously, "something that is like the beating of vast wings." Herodias tells him that he must be ill, and again suggests that they go within. "I am not ill. It is your daughter who is sick," rejoins Herod. "Never have I seen her so pale." "I have told you not to look at her," enjoins his wife.

Herod orders that wine be brought, and invites Salome to drink with him. "Dip into it thy little red lips," he says, "that I may drain the cup." But Salome tells him that she is not thirsty. Herod orders ripe fruits, and invites her to partake of them with him—he desires, he says, "to see in a fruit the mark of thy little

white teeth." But Salome is not hungry. He invites her to sit beside him; but she is not tired, she says. Herodias taunts him: "You see what she thinks of you."

The voice of Jokanaan is heard from the cistern, proclaiming that the day which he foretold has come to pass. Herodias urges Herod to silence him. "This man is forever vomiting insults against me," she complains. Herod observes that Jokanaan has said nothing against her; and that, besides, "he is a very great prophet." Herodias responds tartly that she does not believe in prophets; and she taunts the Tetrarch with being afraid of Jokanaan. Herod denies it—he "is afraid of no man." "Then why," retorts Herodias, "do you not deliver him to the Jews, who for six months past have been clamoring for him?" Herod replies that he has heard enough on this subject; his determination is firm: he will not deliver him to the Jews; for the prophet, he says, is "a holy man. . . a man who has seen God."

Then ensues a heated dispute among the listening Jews concerning the claims of Jokanaan. Some deny that any man has seen God since the

prophet Elias, and they wrangle loudly over the nature of God and His ways of revealing Himself. Herodias, annoyed at the tumult, would have Herod silence them. But the Tetrarch ignores her. The voice of Jokanaan is heard again proclaiming the coming of the Lord. "I hear upon the mountains," he chants, "the feet of Him who shall be the Saviour of the world." Herod's attention is arrested, and he asks what the words of the Prophet mean. The reference, explains a Nazarene, is to "Messias who has come, and who everywhere worketh miracles." He tells how, "in a little town of Galilee," He changed water into wine, and of how, elsewhere, He healed lepers. "He hath healed blind people also," he continues; "and He was seen on a mountain talking with angels." There was also, he says, the miracle of the daughter of Jairus: "He raised her from the dead." "He raises the dead?" exclaims Herod, awe-struck. "I do not wish Him to do that," he exclaims in agitation. "I forbid Him to do that! It would be terrible if the dead came back," he adds, smitten by the memory of his own crimes.

Again are heard the imprecations of Jokanaan, directed against "the daughter of Babylon, with her golden eyes and her gilded eyelids! Thus saith the Lord God, Let there come up against her a multitude of men. Let the people take stones and stone her. . . . Let the war captains pierce her with their swords, let them crush her beneath their shields. . . . It is thus that I will wipe out all wickedness from the earth, and that all women shall learn not to imitate her abominations."

"You hear what he says against me?" cries Herodias, enraged; "you allow him to revile your wife?" "He did not speak your name," rejoins Herod. The voice of the Prophet continues, foretelling the coming of that day "when the sun shall become black like sackcloth of hair, and the moon shall become like blood, and the stars of the heavens shall fall upon the earth like ripe figs that fall from the fig tree, and the kings of the earth shall be afraid."

"Command him to be silent," cries Herodias again; but Herod, whose gaze has been fastened upon Salome, pays no heed.

"Dance for me, Salome," he says. But Salome answers that she has no desire to dance. He pleads with her, telling her that he is sad to-night, and promising to give to her, if she consents, whatever she may ask, even unto the half of his kingdom. Salome, rising, asks if he will indeed give her whatsoever she shall ask. Herod repeats his assurance. She bids him swear it, and he swears by his life, his crown, and his gods. "You have sworn, Tetrarch," she says. "I have sworn, Salome," he agrees. Then suddenly he shivers. "There is an icy wind," he complains, "and I hear . . . wherefore do I hear in the air the beating of wings? Ah, one might fancy a bird, a huge black bird that hovers over the terrace. Why can I not see it, this bird? The beat of its wings is terrible. The breath of the wind of its wings is terrible. It is a chill wind." His vague terrors, and his sensual imaginings at the thought of the spectacle which has been promised him, excite him beyond control. The wind is not cold, he exclaims; it is hot. "I am choking!" he cries. "Pour water on my hands. Give me snow to eat. Loosen my mantle. Quick!

quick! loosen my mantle. Nay, but leave it. It is my garland that hurts me, my garland of roses. The flowers are like fire." He tears the wreath from his head and throws it on a table. "Ah, I can breathe now!" he says; "now I am happy. Will you not dance for me, Salome?"

"I will not have her dance," interjects Herodias; but Salome responds: "I will dance for you, Tetrarch." As slaves bring perfumes and veils, and removes Salome's sandals, the warning voice of Jokanaan is heard again. "Do not dance, my daughter," pleads Herodias; but Salome answers, "I am ready, Tetrarch"; and she dances the "Dance of the Seven Veils."

When she has finished, Herod, who has looked on in voluptuous delight, exclaims: "Wonderful! Wonderful! Come near, Salome, come near, that I may give you your reward. . . . What wouldst thou have? Speak!"

Salome kneels before him. "I would," she says, "that they presently bring me in a silver charger—" "In a silver charger?" laughs Herod, quite misunderstanding; "she is charming, is she not? What is it you would have

in a silver charger, O sweet and fair Salome, you who are fairer than all the daughters of Judæa? What would you have them bring thee in a silver charger? Tell me. Whatsoever it may be, they shall give it you. My treasures belong to thee. What is it, Salome?"

"The head of Jokanaan," answers Salome, rising. "No! no!" cries Herod, in extreme dismay, as Herodias exclaims: "That is well said, my daughter." Herod is terrified, and would reason with Salome. "It is not that thou desirest," he says; "do not listen to your mother's voice. She is ever giving you evil counsel. Do not heed her." But Salome rejoins that it is not her mother's voice that she heeds; it is for her own pleasure that she asks the head of Jokanaan in a silver charger; and she reminds him of his oath. Herod acknowledges it—he has indeed sworn by his gods; but he prays that she ask of him something else. "Ask of me the half of my kingdom and I will give it thee. But ask not of me what thy lips have asked," he entreats.

"I ask of you," insists Salome unrelentingly, "the head of Jokanaan." Herodias upholds

her; for the Prophet, she reminds the Tetrarch, has covered her with insults, has said unspeakable things against her. "Do not yield, my daughter!" she cries, "he has sworn an oath."

Herod, half-distracted and filled with evil forebodings, implores her to reconsider. "I have ever loved thee," he reminds her. "It may be that I have loved thee too much. Therefore ask not this thing of me." It is a terrible thing that she has asked of him, he says. Is she not jesting? "The head of a man that is cut from his body is ill to look upon, is it not?" It is not meet that the eyes of a virgin should look upon such a thing, he tells her. He will offer her any substitute, any recompense. He has a great emerald—the largest and most beautiful emerald in the whole world. Would she not like that? "I demand," says Salome inflexibly, "the head of Jokanaan." "You are not listening!" he cries; "you say that to trouble me, because I have looked at you all this evening. It is true . . . your beauty troubled me." He calls excitedly for wine, and continues his pleading. "You know," he says, "my white peacocks, my

beautiful white peacocks, that walk in the garden between the myrtles and the tall cypress trees. . . . In the whole world there is no king who has peacocks like unto my peacocks. I will give them all to you." Salome is obdurate, and merely repeats her curt demand. Herod entreats her to remember that Jokanaan is "a holy man; the finger of God has touched him." Does she wish a misfortune to come upon him? Desperately he renews his efforts to beguile her from her purpose. He has jewels, he tells her, that not even her mother has seen; jewels that are marvelous: a collar of pearls, set in four rows; topazes, yellow as are the eyes of tigers, and topazes that are pink as the eyes of a wood-pigeon, and green topazes that are as the eyes of cats; opals that burn always, with an ice-like flame; chrysolites and beryls and chrysoprases and rubies; sardonyx and hyacinth stones, and stones of chalcedony —and all these, he promises, he will give to her. He will give her anything she may ask. He will give her the mantle of the high priest; he will even give her the veil of the Sanctuary.

"Give me the head of Jokanaan," cries Salome.

Herod sinks back in his seat. "Let her be given what she asks!" he cries despairingly. "Of a truth she is her mother's child!"

A soldier approaches. Herodias draws from the hand of the Tetrarch the ring of death, and gives it to the soldier, who straightway bears it to the executioner. The executioner goes down into the cistern. "Ah! wherefore did I give my oath?" cries Herod. "Kings ought never to pledge their word. If they keep it not, it is terrible, and if they keep it, it is terrible also."

Salome goes to the cistern and listens. She wonders that there is no sound. "Why does he not cry out, this man?" "Strike, strike, I tell you!" she calls to the executioner. Again she listens, but hears no sound. There is a silence, she says, a terrible silence. . . . "Ah! something has fallen upon the ground. I heard something fall. It is the sword of the headsman. He is afraid, this slave. He has let his sword fall. He dare not kill him. He is a coward, this slave! Let soldiers be sent!" She calls to the page of Herodias, and orders

that he command the soldiers to go down into the cistern and bring her the thing the Tetrarch has promised her, the thing that is hers. The page recoils, and she turns to the soldiers, repeating her command. At this moment a huge black arm, the arm of the executioner, comes forth from the cistern, bearing on a silver shield the head of Jokanaan. Salome seizes it. Herod hides his face with his cloak. Herodias smiles and fans herself. The Nazarenes fall on their knees and begin to pray.

"Ah!" cries Salome exultantly, "thou wouldst not suffer me to kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan. Well, I will kiss it now. I will bite it with my teeth as one bites a ripe fruit." With rising ecstasy, she apostrophizes the severed head:

Yes, I will kiss thy mouth, Jokanaan. I said it; did I not say it? I said it. Ah! I will kiss it now. . . . But wherefore dost thou not look at me, Jokanaan? Thine eyes that were so terrible, so full of rage and scorn, are shut now. Wherefore are they shut? Open thine eyes! Lift up thine eyelids, Jokanaan! Wherefore dost thou not look at me? Art thou afraid of me, Jokanaan, that thou wilt not look

at me? . . . And thy tongue, that was like a red snake darting poison, it moves no more, it says nothing now, Jokanaan, that scarlet viper that spat its venom upon me. It is strange, is it not? How is it that the red viper stirs no longer? . . . Thou wouldst have none of me, Jokanaan. Thou didst reject me. Thou didst speak evil words against me. Thou didst treat me as a harlot, as a wanton, me, Salome, daughter of Herodias, Princess of Judæa! Well, Jokanaan, I still live, but thou, thou art dead, and thy head belongs to me. I can do with it what I will. I can throw it to the dogs and to the birds of the air. That which the dogs leave, the birds of the air shall devour. . . . Ah, Jokanaan, Jokanaan, thou wert beautiful! Thy body was a column of ivory set on a silver socket. It was a garden full of doves and of silver lilies. There was nothing in the world so white as thy body. There was nothing in the world so black as thy hair. In the whole world there was nothing so red as thy mouth. Thy voice was a censer that scattered strange perfumes, and when I looked on thee I heard a strange music. Behind thine hands and thy curses thou didst hide thy face. Thou didst put upon thine eyes the covering of him who would see his God. Well, thou hast seen thy God, Jokanaan, but me, me, thou didst never

see. If thou hadst seen me thou wouldst have loved me. I am athirst for thy beauty; I am hungry for thy body, and neither wine nor fruits can appease my desire. What shall I do now, Jokanaan? Neither the floods nor the great waters can quench my passion. Ah! ah! wherefore didst thou look at me? If thou hadst looked at me thou hadst loved me. Well I know that thou wouldst have loved me, and the mystery of Love is greater than the mystery of Death.

Herod, looking on in horror, exclaims: "She is monstrous, thy daughter. What she has done is a great crime. I am sure that it is a crime against some unknown God." But Herodias rejoins that she is well pleased with her daughter. Herod rises from his seat, exclaiming that he will not stay on the terrace; that he will not suffer his eyes to behold such sights. He orders that the torches be put out. "Hide the moon! Hide the stars!" he cries. "Let us hide ourselves in our palace, Herodias! I begin to be afraid!"

The slaves put out the torches. The stars disappear. A great cloud crosses the moon and conceals it completely. The stage becomes

quite dark. The Tetrarch begins to climb the staircase. Out of the darkness is heard the voice of Salome: "Ah! I have kissed thy mouth, Jokanaan," she chants, "I have kissed thy mouth. There was a bitter taste on thy lips. Was it the taste of blood? . . . But perchance it is the taste of love. . . . They say that love hath a bitter taste. . . . But what of that? what of that? I have kissed thy mouth, Jokanaan, I have kissed thy mouth!"

A ray of moonlight falls on Salome and envelops her. Herod, turning around and seeing her, cries wildly: "Kill that woman!" The soldiers rush forward and crush Salome beneath their shields.

II

THE MUSIC OF "SALOME"

Its Characteristics

Strauss completed the score of "Salome" at Berlin in June, 1905. It is numbered opus 54, and follows the "Symphonia Domestica" in the list of his published works.

Beyond question it is his most elaborate and most venturesome work. In complexity of structure and audacity of invention it far surpasses any of his previous achievements, either symphonic or operatic. This is no place, as I have already said, for critical estimates of any kind; and I desire to be understood as confining myself in this brief characterization to sheer description and exposition. So, in comparing the music of "Salome" with Strauss' previous scores, I speak, as far as possible, from an objective point of view.

On the side of constructive musicianship, then, it may be positively said that Strauss in

this work has outdone himself. In polyphonic tissue it is not so dense and full as the "Symphonia Domestica" or "Ein Heldenleben"; but in harmonic boldness and in elaborateness and intricacy of orchestration it is his most extreme performance. His use of dissonance is as persistent as it is nonchalant. The entire score is a harmonic *tour de force*—a practically uninterrupted texture of new and constantly varied sequences and chord formations. Much of it is designed quite frankly and obviously as sheer noise, intentional cacophony. During a rehearsal of the opera at Prague, Strauss is said to have stopped the orchestral players with the remark: "That is too gentle—we want wild beasts here! This is no civilized music: it is music which must crash!" At more than one place in the score the orchestra is literally divided against itself, and thunders simultaneously in two violently antagonistic keys; or the band as a whole will be playing in A-flat major, while the singer intones valiantly a phrase in A (natural) minor. That Strauss himself maintains a serenely optimistic attitude toward the possibilities of human and mechanical ac-

complishment is illustrated by another remark of his at rehearsal. "No consideration for the singers!" he is alleged to have exclaimed impatiently at one place; "in this opera there is no consideration!"—a point of view which will be borne out, for musicians, by a certain passage in the orchestral score where the violins are required to play the note E below the low G, without any opportunity being provided for the players to retune their instruments—an utterly impossible feat.

In spite, however, of its unprecedented difficulties and its inveterate novelty of effect, the work is based, in its main outlines, upon the principles of musico-dramatic structure enunciated and exemplified by Wagner. It is a true lyric-drama: that is to say, the music is always and uncompromisingly at the service of the dramatic situation, enforcing and italicizing the meaning of the text and action. Its advance upon Wagner,* from the constructive point of

* I need scarcely say that I am not comparing the *artistic* quality of Strauss' achievement with that of his great predecessor, but am merely tracing its analogies and departures in the matter of form.

view, lies in the greater fulness with which the orchestral commentary is elaborated and sustained. It has been aptly characterized as "an orchestral tone-painting, accompanied by a dramatic action on the stage." The instrumental commentary has, indeed, almost the substance and independence of purely symphonic writing. The Wagnerian system of typical themes is elaborately exploited, and is made to serve an illustrative and significant purpose that never flags in explicitness and detail. The score is full of every variety of tone painting, broadly delineative as well as extraordinarily minute. In addition to its remorseless and prodigal realism of exposition, the music contains numerous ebullitions of a sly and fantastic humor that are not apparent to the listener—plays upon words, jocose and daring tricks of instrumentation, recondite pranks suggested by allusions in the text, intended, at times, rather for the eye of the curious student than for the ear of the listener. It is all part of the enormous and facile ingenuity that has contrived the expressional side of the work—that has found, for example, no more difficulty in setting the rhymeless and

meterless prose of Wilde's drama than in handling the prodigious orchestra for which the music is scored. The observer stands continually in amaze at the unconcerned ease with which technical difficulties and complexities of a truly staggering nature are invited and overcome—especially and most strikingly in the matter of instrumentation. Strauss has scored here for a colossal orchestra, and he has chosen to handle it in the most blithely audacious way. One may note, as a single instance, the manner in which he has written for the strings. As musical students and most observant listeners know, the stringed instruments in an orchestra —consisting of violins, violas, 'cellos, and double basses—are usually treated by the composer as a four-voiced or five-voiced choir. Occasionally, modern writers have subdivided the mass of strings into many more parts—Wagner, for example, in the love duet in the second act of "Tristan und Isolde," separates his strings into sixteen parts; but few have resorted to such expedients, except on particular occasions and for special effects. In "Salome," though, Strauss has scored during extended stretches

for a mass of strings intricately subdivided—sometimes into as many as twenty parts; not simply for polyphonic purposes, but to obtain unusual effects of tone coloring. By this means he has contrived to find quite new and unexampled hues for certain chords and groups of chords. His orchestral palette is at once more richly laid out and more variously mixed than that which is at the disposal of the average composer. It is not every music maker who dares to devise his instrumental color schemes with the serene disregard for tradition displayed by the author of "Salome"—to require, for example, his violas and 'cellos to play parts immemorially delegated to the violins; to make his double basses cavort with the agility and the abandon of clarinets; to write unheard-of figures for the tympani player, and to demand of the trombonist that he transform his instrument into a flute; yet Strauss, at almost every point in his score, makes some such demand upon his executants.

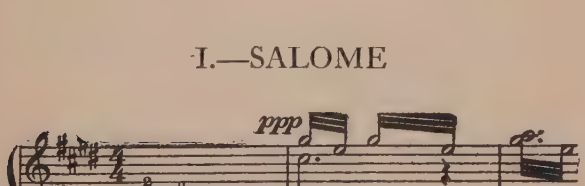
It is interesting to note the constitution of his orchestra—the orchestra that is called upon to voice the most prodigiously ingenious and com-

plex score ever conceived and realized by the mind of a musician. These are the instruments required for a performance of "Salome":—16 first and 16 second violins; not less than 10 nor more than 12 violas; 10 'cellos; 8 double basses; 3 flutes; 1 piccolo; 2 oboes; 1 English horn; 1 Heckelphone (a recently manufactured instrument of the "reed" family, named after its inventor, Heckel, which may be described as standing midway between the English horn and the bassoon; it has a downward compass five notes lower than that of the English horn); 1 clarinet in E-flat, 2 in B-flat, 2 in A, and 1 bass clarinet in B-flat; 3 bassoons and 1 double bassoon; 6 horns; 4 trumpets; 4 trombones; 1 bass tuba; 4 kettledrums of usual size, and 1 of smaller dimension; bass drums, side drum, tam-tam, cymbals, triangle, tambourine, xylophone, castanets, and glockenspiel; 2 harps, an organ, a harmonium, and a celesta—in all, 112 instruments.

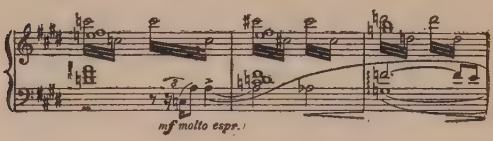
THE SCORE AND THE MOTIVES

As Strauss has conceived his music drama, the action begins abruptly, without overture or prelude. The second measure of the score discloses one of its most important themes: the first of the motives characteristic of Salome herself, and representing more especially her psychic personality. This motive—volatile, mercurial, and impetuous in character—is sung by the clarinet, introducing Narraboth's ardent comment on the loveliness of his beloved:

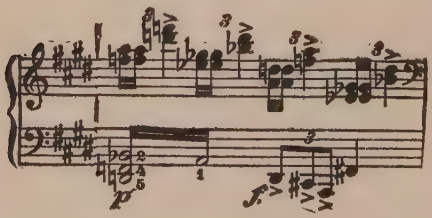
I.—SALOME



It is followed almost immediately by the motive of *Narraboth's Longing*, voiced, "molto espressivo," by the 'cellos:

II.—NARRABOTH'S LONGING

There is a return of the *Salome* motive, when Narraboth says of the "princess" whom he sees in the moon, that she seems to be dancing; then, as the sound of uproarious dispute comes from the banquet hall where Herod is entertaining his guests, there is heard the uncouth and discordant motive of the *Jews* (page 6, measure 13):*

III.—THE JEWS



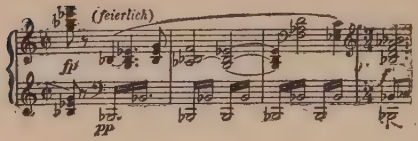
It continues, *crescendo*, in the orchestra as one of the soldiers tells his fellow that the Jews

* These references are to the piano score of "Salome" prepared by Otto Singer and published by Adolph Fürstner

are responsible for the uproar—that they "are always like that—always disputing about their religion." As Narraboth sighs again for his beloved and rhapsodizes upon her beauty, his friend, the page of Herodias, warns him to beware of gazing overlong upon Salome's loveliness—"You look at her too much," he says; and his warning is accompanied by a gloomy phrase on the horn (page 8, measure 6), which occurs again a few measures later when the page reiterates his caution still more emphatically. He is interrupted by the voice of Jokanaan, which is heard from the cistern. His majestic announcement of the coming of his Master is accompanied by his personal theme, which may be called after his own name, the *Jokanaan* motive. Its first appearance, as a grave 'cello melody in C major (page 11, measure 10), is only in outline. It is developed in full harmony twenty-two pages farther on, when Salome stands awaiting the Prophet's emergence from the cistern (page 33, measure 22). It is quoted here in its mature form:

of Berlin. The indications as to the location of the example referred to give the number of the page and the measure in which the passage begins.

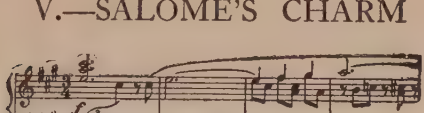
IV.—JOKANAAN



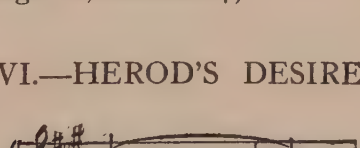
The succeeding discussion among the soldiers as to the Prophet's strange personality and stranger ways is accompanied by the *Jokanaan* theme and by a brief and portentous phrase, uttered by the 'cellos and double basses (page 13, measure 10), expressive of the awe engendered by the Forerunner.

Their talk is broken in upon by Narraboth's excited announcement that the Princess has left the table in the banquet hall and is coming toward them. The motive of *Narraboth's Longing* and the *Salome* theme contend together in an ardent orchestral outburst, and then the vivid motive of *Salome's Charm* (page 15, measure 7), heard from the violins, violas, and celesta, accompanies Salome's excited entrance. This is a theme which may be interpreted as characterizing all that pertains to Salome's

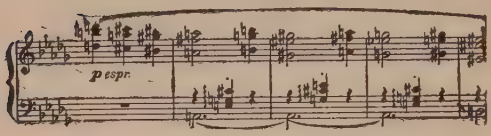
external being—her fascination of person and manner, her sheer physical aspect:

V.—SALOME'S CHARM

As she speaks resentfully of the strangely persistent glance which Herod has bent upon her during the evening we hear on the 'cellos and bass clarinet the furtive theme of *Herod's Desire* (page 16, measure 4):

VI.—HEROD'S DESIRE

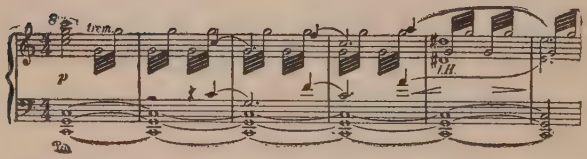
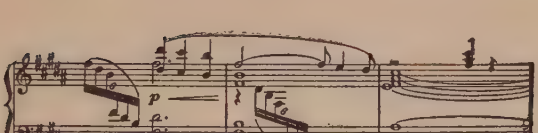


It is followed significantly a few measures later by an insinuating phrase in thirds, sung by the violins and celesta, the motive of *Salome's Grace*:

VII.—SALOME'S GRACE

There is a brief reminiscence of the motives of the *Jews* (page 17, measure 5) as she speaks contemptuously of Herod's Semitic guests "tearing each other in pieces over their foolish ceremonies," and of *Salome's Grace*, as the page again interjects his forebodings of disaster. When Salome speaks of the moon as "a virgin," with a virgin's beauty, we hear the theme of *Salome's Charm*, augmented and almost reposeful (page 19, measure 3). When the voice of Jokanaan is heard again from his prison, we hear it in more impetuous mood and temper, as Salome asks who it is that has spoken. There is an augmented recurrence of *Narraboth's Longing* theme as the young Syrian urges Salome to go with him into the garden, and of the *Grace* motive, harmonically and rhythmically distorted, as she observes angrily that the Prophet is he who has said "terrible things"

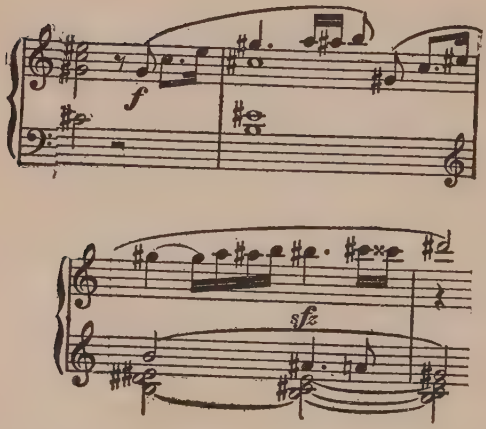
about her mother. We hear the latter theme again, restored to its original symmetry, as Salome asks if the Prophet is an old man. Again comes the voice of Jokanaan, sonorously proclaiming evil things to come in the land of Palestine. "What a strange voice! I would speak with him," cries Salome, and we hear her two principal themes—*Salome* and *Salome's Charm*—in close conjunction (page 24, measure 7), followed by the phrase expressive of the soldiers' awe (which has already been noted) as they tell Salome that it is against the Tetrarch's orders that anybody should see Jokanaan. Salome insists, and her two main themes are contrapuntally combined in an impetuous fortissimo passage. The soldiers remaining obdurate, she turns wheedlingly to the young Syrian, and immediately her *Charm* theme becomes gentle and beguiling. In the ensuing scene with Narraboth, wherein she persuades him against his will and conscience to order the Prophet brought forth, we find recurrences of her own important themes, of the motive of *Narraboth's Longing*, and of a chord progression, twice repeated, expressive of Sa-

lome's solicitations (page 29, measure 13). As Narraboth reluctantly yields to her beguilements and commands that the Prophet be brought forth, we hear, *crescendo*, the *Charm* theme, followed, as Salome awaits with curious expectancy the appearance of the Prophet, by a brief orchestral intermezzo in which are combined the *Jokanaan* theme and two new motives: that of *Prophecy* (page 33, measure 31) —a portentous phrase intoned by the trombones and 'cellos, and a theme (page 34, measure 15) which is used later to characterize Salome's ecstatic contemplation of Jokanaan. In their complete form these two motives are as follows:

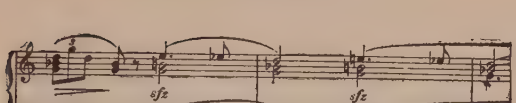
VIII.—PROPHECY

IX.—ECSTASY

As Jokanaan comes out of the cistern—accompanied by the solemn tones of the *Prophet* theme—and Salome, looking at him, steps slowly back, there begins the long and important scene of Salome's attempted seduction of the Prophet, in which a number of the dominant themes of the score are definitely proclaimed and exploited. We hear, first, the *Jokanaan* and *Prophecy* motives, as the Forerunner declaims, in majestic and figurative speech, against the abominations of "she who gave herself up to the lust of her eyes." Then, as Salome's resentment against his aspersions upon her mother is submerged by the rising tide of her desire, we hear a new motive, which grows constantly more passionate and more insistent—the motive of *Yearning*. It is adumbrated by the horns and 'cellos in the early part

of the scene (page 37, measure 8), but is not definitely outlined until later, when it accompanies Salome's exhortation: "Speak to me again, Jokanaan: thy voice is like music in my ears!" In this form it appears on page 46, measure 7.

X.—YEARNING



An incidental theme is the *Anger* motive, which is first heard (page 37, measure 10) as John inveighs against the abomination of Herodias:

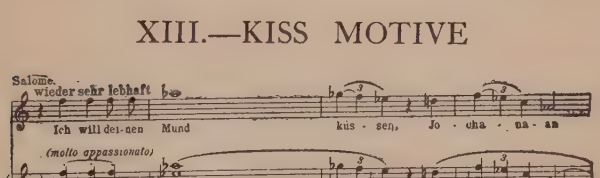
XI.—ANGER

As Salome says softly to herself, "He is terrible!" a very important new motive is given out by the clarinet over tremolos in the strings (page 40, last bar). It is the motive of *Enticement*:

XII.—ENTICEMENT

This motive continues, interwoven with that of *Narraboth's Longing*, as Salome's rhapsodizing grows bolder and more ecstatic. We hear the *Prophecy* motive as she speaks of Jokanaan's wasted form; and, later, the theme of *Salome's Charm* as she tells Jokanaan, in answer

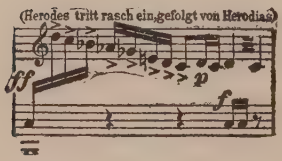
to his question, who she is. As she renews her entreaties that he speak with her, the motive of *Yearning* grows more vehement and assertive, accompanied by reiterations of the *Enticement* and *Jokanaan* themes. The attentive observer will note the striking manner in which the figure of *Enticement* is rendered sinister and cacophonous as Salome retorts upon Jokanaan with her speech about the hideousness of his body. Attention may be called, also, to the theme which is given out by divided strings and harps when Salome tells Jokanaan that his body "is white, like the lilies of a field that the mower has never mowed" (page 50, measure 11). This is the motive of *Ecstasy*, which, in a rudimentary form, has already been noted. As Salome apostrophizes the mouth of Jokanaan, the motive of *Yearning*, with that of *Jokanaan* as an under voice, reaches a point of climax (page 60, measure 6). It is followed immediately (page 60, measure 12) by a jubilant phrase in thirds, which occurs again at the end of the action, when Salome, triumphantly addressing the severed head of the Prophet, tells him that though he has seen his God, he has never seen her. Her

importunities grow more and more unrestrained, and culminate in a theme for the divided strings (*molto appassionato*) which is heard when Salome announces her determination to kiss the mouth of Jokanaan (page 64, measure 15). This is the *Kiss* motive, and from here on it dominates the scene to the end:

XIII.—KISS MOTIVE

It is followed almost immediately (page 65, measure 12) by an outburst of the *Salome* theme, combined with that of *Narraboth's Longing*, as the young Syrian, in despair, kills himself, and falls between the princess and Jokanaan. We hear the *Kiss* and *Jokanaan* motives in combination as the Prophet denounces Salome and bids her seek out Him who is on the sea of Galilee, and ask remission of her sins.

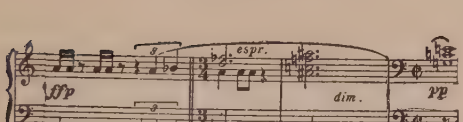
As Jokanaan descends into the cistern, the theme of *Prophecy* is thundered forth by the orchestra, interwoven with the *Enticement, Ecstasy*, *Yearning*, *Kiss*, and *Jokanaan* motives. A rapid *diminuendo* leads into a reminiscence of the *Salome* motive (page 77, measure 11); we hear the motive of the *Jews*; and as Herod, followed by Herodias, enters hastily from the banquet hall, the motive of *Fear*—an agitated phrase in descending whole steps—is given out *forte* by the violins (page 78, measure 15):

XIV.—FEAR



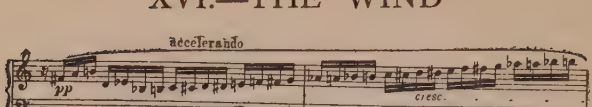
It is followed almost immediately by a gloomy and sinister motive exposed by the trombones, tubas, and deep wood wind (page 79, measure 2)—the motive of *Herod* himself:

XV.—HEROD



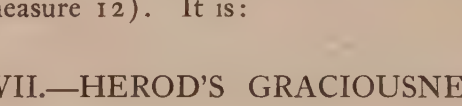
As the Tetrarch speaks apprehensively of the strange appearance of the moon—which seems, to his superstitious imagination, "like a mad woman, a mad woman who is seeking everywhere for lovers"—we hear a variant of the *Fear* theme. Herod slips in the blood of Narraboth, and there is a passing citation of the two important *Salome* motives, as he recalls to Herodias that he has seen the young Syrian look languorously at the princess. He orders the body removed, and as he shivers fearfully in the chill night air, complaining querulously of the cold, the violins and 'cellos, muted, give out a mysterious chromatic phrase (page 84, measure 9)—the motive of the *Wind*, which reflects the terror-haunted and half-insane wanderings of the Tetrarch's overheated brain:

XVI.—THE WIND



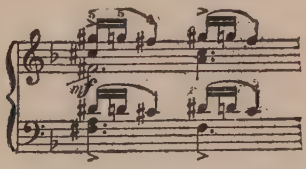
As he speaks of the wind as being like "the beating of wings," there is a significant reappearance of the *Prophecy* theme, recalling the fateful forecast already delivered by Jokanaan (page 87, measure 8). There are reminiscences of the *Herod* and *Salome* motives as the Tetrarch comments to Herodias upon the paleness of her daughter. He invites Salome to partake of wine and fruit with him, and we hear a new theme, though not a very important one (page 91, measure 12). It is:

XVII.—HEROD'S GRACIOUSNESS

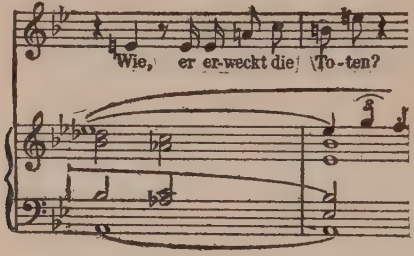


This continues, interwoven with the themes of *Salome* and *Salome's Charm*, and leads into an episode in which is heard again the voice of

Jokanaan, prophesying the coming of the time which he has foretold. As Herod, refusing Herodias' request that he be silenced, is taunted by her with fearing Jokanaan, there is a recurrence of the *Fear* motive (page 96, measure 14). Herodias urges him to deliver the Prophet to the Jews, who have been clamoring for him; and this introduces an energetic and sharply characterized scene in which the Jews discuss among themselves the authenticity of the Prophet's deliverances and doctrines, and the alleged coming of the Messiah. In this occur the theme of the Jews, and a new motive, that of *Dispute* (page 100, measure 9) given out by the wood-wind in querulous and dissonant chromatics:

XVIII.—DISPUTE

Attention should be called to the singular passage in which Herod, being told that the Man

of Galilee has raised from the dead the daughter of Jairus, replies, in an awed voice: "He raises the dead?" At this place (page 114, measure 6) the orchestra plays in the key of A-flat major while Herod sings his phrase in A minor:



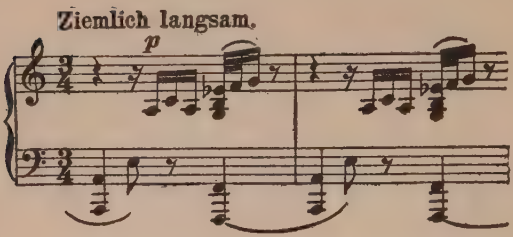
As the voice of Jokanaan is heard again, uttering his maledictions upon the crimes of Herodias, the orchestra intones his characteristic theme, accompanied by those of *Anger* and *Prophecy*.

Herodias' infuriated protests lead abruptly into the brief but high-pitched scene which ushers in the dance. As Herod turns to Salome and begs her to dance for him, and throughout his repeated entreaties, we hear the motive indicative of her charm, varied by an altered form of the theme of *Salome's Grace* (page 122,

measure 6). Herod shivers in the midst of his supplications, and the motive of the *Wind* is sounded, *piano*, followed by a variant of the *Prophecy* theme as he speaks again of hearing in the air a beating of giant wings. There is a return of his own theme (page 129, measure 10), and as, for a moment, he loses control of himself under the promptings of his inflamed anticipations, the orchestra breaks forth, *fortissimo*, in an impassioned sequence of descending "seventh" chords, scored with singular intensity (page 131, measure 11). The music quiets suddenly, with a reminiscence of the theme of *Salome's Charm*, and an augmented form of the motive of *Fear*. As slaves bring perfumes and the seven veils, in preparation for the dance, the voice of Jokanaan is again heard, accompanied by his motive in one of its altered forms; there is a return of the *Charm* theme, and the dance begins.

Its introductory phrases (page 137, measure 1) are rapid and impetuous, but upon the appearance of the principal dance theme (page 138, measure 1), the tempo grows slower, and the theme of the *Dance* is sung languorously by a solo viola and flute:

XIX—THE DANCE



This is combined with the first *Salome* theme, and with the motive of *Enticement*, later with the *Kiss* theme, and with those of *Salome's Charm* and *Ecstasy*. A second dance theme appears (page 142, measure 8), scored for violins, violas, horn, clarinet, English horn, and Heckelphone. There is a *crescendo*, followed by a recurrence of the *Enticement*, *Charm*, *Ecstasy*, and *Grace* motives, which lead, *accelerando*, into a section in rapid time (page 145, measure 24—*Sehr schnell*), and a return of the first dance theme. The motives already mentioned are marshaled again, and the dance reaches its climax in a double *fortissimo* on the *Ecstasy* theme, with the first *Dance* theme as an under

voice. The scene ends on a prolonged trill, diminuendo, with a return of the *Enticement* motive as a sort of *coda*:

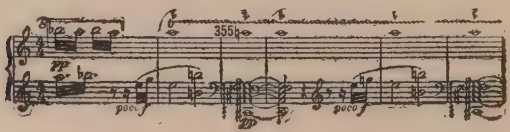
From this point forward the music proceeds rapidly to its apex of excitement and dramatic climax. Herod, delighted with the spectacle he has witnessed, asks what it is that Salome desires for reward. As Salome makes her momentous request, the orchestra sounds the theme of *Enticement* under sustained trills, *piano*. Herod starts up in dismay and terror, and the *Fear* motive (augmented) is heard, *fortissimo*, in the orchestra, persisting as he pleads with her to reconsider her resolve, and followed (page 155, measure 2) by the motive of *Salome's Charm*. As Herodias fortifies her resolution, reminding Herod of his oath, there is heard a harsh descending progression of chords which indicate her mood of vengeance (page 157, measures 1; 17). It is followed by an inversion of the *Fear* theme, in an altered tempo (page 158, measure 5), and by the motive of *Herod's Desire* (page 158, measure 14—see Example VI), as the Tetrarch reminds Salome that he has "ever loved her." He offers her his mar-

velous emeralds; his incomparable white peacocks; but Salome, accompanied always by ominous orchestral trills, has but her one answer. Herod beseeches her to remember that the Prophet whose murder she would compass is "a holy man," and we hear the *Jokanaan* motive, and a new theme—*Herod's Pleading* (page 166, measure 1):

XX.—HEROD'S PLEADING

This new theme forms the texture of the accompaniment to the long speech of the Tetrarch, in which he temptingly sets forth to Salome the glories of his jewels, and leads into a swelling orchestral *crescendo* as he offers her even the veil of the sanctuary. "Give me the head of Jokanaan!" is Salome's only reply; and as Herod sinks back despairingly in his seat, the motive of *Fear* sounds *fortissimo* in the orches-

tra, followed by a triumphant version of the *Enticement* theme, and a little later by a mournful version of Jokanaan's motive. As Salome listens, in extreme but suppressed excitement, over the cistern, watching for the result of the executioner's work, there occurs an extraordinary effect in the orchestra. Over a soft roll of the drums, a solo double bass emits *sforzando* throbs in the highest part of its register. Strauss here directs in his score that the string of the instrument, instead of being merely pressed down, be squeezed tightly between the fingers. The result is a curious choked yet poignant effect that is of a highly dramatic expressiveness. There are reminiscences of the first *Dance* theme, and of the *Salome* motive, as she waits in growing agitation. We hear a broken and tragic form of the *Jokanaan* theme, and a distorted version of that of *Salome's Grace.* Finally, as the severed head is delivered to her upon the silver dish, the *Salome* theme bursts forth exultantly in the orchestra, paired with that of *Enticement.* These two motives, together with the *Kiss* theme, comprise the texture of the earlier portion of Salome's

passion-crazed rhapsody over Jokanaan's head. Later, as she apostrophizes the memory of his body, the *Ecstasy* theme is broadly declaimed (page 191, measure 8), varied by the motives of *Longing*, *Prophecy*, and *Charm*, with an expressive recurrence of the *Jokanaan* theme. The *Kiss* motive appears again toward the end (page 195, measure 3), and we hear again the theme of the *Dance* (page 197, measure 7) in augmentation and heavily accented. "She is monstrous!" cries Herod, looking on with horror even in his brutalized and blood-stained soul; and the orchestra sounds the motives of *Fear* and *The Wind*. As the slaves, at Herod's command, extinguish the torches, and a black cloud crosses and conceals the moon, we hear the *Enticement* motive, followed by a shudderful and amazing effect in the orchestra: a mysteriously dissonant chord sounded, *pianissimo*, by muted trombones, divided 'cellos, a solo double-bass, horns, wood-wind, organ, and tam-tam:

There are recurrences of the *Kiss* and *Longing* motives, and a climactic outburst of the motive of *Ecstasy*, under wildly exultant trills, as Salome chants, in the extreme of amorous abandonment, that she has at last kissed the mouth of Jokanaan. The moon comes out from under the cloud, covering Salome with light; and as Herod, in a shriekingly dissonant cry, commands her death, the curtain closes hastily upon a final and broken recurrence of the motive of *Enticement*.

THE END

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